



News From

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Monroe County Executive

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BROOKS, JOHNSON COLLABORATE ON RENAISSANCE SQUARE

*Vision Prompts Concerted Effort to Build
Downtown Performing Arts Center,
Transit Center and MCC Damon City Campus*

Monroe County Executive Maggie Brooks and Rochester Mayor William A. Johnson, Jr., were joined today by key community leaders when they announced an unprecedented collaborative effort to pursue plans for the development of Renaissance Square, a multi-use complex to be built at the corner of Main Street and Clinton Avenue in downtown Rochester. The primary elements of the proposed complex could include a Transit Center, Monroe Community College's Damon City Campus and a Performing Arts Center.

The economic impact of a project of this magnitude could benefit the entire region. It is believed that the center would add significantly to the cultural, educational and transit dynamics of downtown Rochester while generating hundreds of construction jobs locally. Renaissance Square is also expected to generate expanding private sector interest in secondary developments within the surrounding area, including housing and first-floor retail space.

"This is the beginning of a process," said Brooks. "The Mayor and I are committed to working together in the coming months to go to Washington and Albany in order to fight for the money we need to make this initiative happen. This type of collaboration among government, business, education and the arts community is unprecedented and we plan to succeed in this effort."

"I look forward to working with Monroe Community College, RGRTA, the arts community, our state and federal delegations, the County Legislature, City Council and Mayor Johnson in making the largest development project in our community's history something our children will be proud of for generations to come," said Brooks.

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“This is also the beginning of an inclusive process, one which will demonstrate unprecedented levels of joint planning, open communications and complete trust,” Johnson said. “As leaders, we must establish at the very beginning of this project a process of citizen participation that will produce a consensus commitment that the Renaissance Square project is in the best interests of the Center City and the entire Rochester region. In addition to working with County Executive Brooks to aggressively seek the money in Albany, Washington and the private sector, I will be working to insure that all of the other elements of this very important project are achieved.”

“Moving forward on Renaissance Square as a united community will provide us all with a greater opportunity to bring hundreds of new jobs to Rochester, enhance our urban transportation system, and ensure educational opportunities remain easily accessible to neighborhood residents,” said Johnson. “I know that, with this concerted effort, we can continue to build on the momentum already evident in our dynamic downtown community.”

“Monroe Community College is very excited to join the Renaissance Square effort with County Executive Brooks and Mayor Johnson,” said MCC President Tom Flynn. “Having our downtown campus so closely connected to a new performing arts center and a new transit center presents many advantages for our students, our programs and the community. I am pleased to be part of the team that is moving this project forward.”

“It’s exciting to see how the project has evolved over time,” said Don Riley, RGRTA CEO. “The linkage of these three elements – arts, education, and transit - makes a very powerful statement of community solidarity.”

“Today’s announcement is another step towards making the Rochester Renaissance project a reality,” said Senator Mike Nozzolio. (R-Fayette) “This project is a historic opportunity to revitalize downtown and make it a premier destination for visitors and residents to enjoy. We must make every effort to work together and take full advantage of the job development and tourism enhancements that will benefit Rochester and the Greater Rochester area for years to come.”

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FUNDING SOURCES

The downtown Transit Center project, which has secured \$50 million in funding, will be built at the corner of Main Street and Clinton Avenue. Monroe Community College has identified downtown Rochester as the location of its to-be-built Damon City Campus and recognizes that many of their students rely on public transportation. Both the state and county have designated funding for the Damon City Campus project.

The third element of the complex, a downtown Performing Arts Center, has been identified as a major priority by the community and government leaders. Funding for the Arts Center has not yet been secured. However, by integrating the Damon City Campus, the Performing Arts Center and the Transit Center into one project - Renaissance Square - all will be eligible to receive federal transportation funding based on congressional initiatives called Livable Communities.

The United States Congress initiated the Livable Communities initiative to strengthen the link between transit systems and communities. To that end, the federal government allows the leveraging of transportation dollars to assist adjacent development on the condition that it is physically and functionally connected to a transit facility.

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